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SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/PASCUAL

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TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: 41 MORE AL-AQSA FUGITIVES INCLUDED IN
AMNESTY/DISARMAMENT DEAL, MOST ON PROBATIONARY STATUS

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. According to PA security contacts, the Israeli Security Agency (ISA, "Shin Bet") accepted 41 al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades fugitives into the amnesty/disarmament agreement, including two high-profile militants. The fugitives have been in PA custody for most of the previous year. Nine received immediate pardons, while the other thirty-two must complete a probationary period and abide by restrictions before amnesty. The PA wants 150 additional fugitives included in the amnesty/disarmament deal. End summary.

41 Fugitives Accepted into Amnesty Program

¶2. (C) PA Deputy Minister of Interior (MoI) Raji al-Najmi told Pol FSN August 26 that the ISA accepted 41 al-Aqsa fugitives into the amnesty/disarmament deal, and told the PA that five other fugitives are not wanted by Israel. Of the 41, nine, who have been in PA detention for nearly one year, were granted immediate amnesty. The ISA approved 20 others (eight from Jenin, six from Nablus and three from Tulkarm) for release from PA security bases to their homes, with the proviso that they cannot receive visitors at night. Al-Najmi said the remaining 12 fugitives (five from Nablus, three from Bethlehem, two from Jenin and one each from Ramallah and Salfit) were accepted on a probationary basis, with the requirement that the PA confiscate their weapons, obtain commitments to refrain from violence against Israelis, confine them on bases and monitor their activities until the ISA reassesses their cases.

List Includes High-Profile Fugitives

¶3. (C) PA security contacts noted to PolOff and Pol FSN that Ala'a Sanagra and Mahdi Akkubah, two of Nablus' high-profile al-Aqsa Brigades militants, were included among those on probationary status. Sanagra, one of Balata Refugee Camp's main militant leaders, turned himself in to PA supervision in April. Akubah, a close associate of Nablus al-Aqsa leader Mahdi Abu Ghazalih, had previously been rejected by the ISA for amnesty, and had been in PA detention since May.

PA Seeks Inclusion of More Fugitives

¶4. (C) Deputy MoI al-Najmi said the PA wants to add about 150 more al-Aqsa Brigades fugitives to the amnesty/disarmament deal, many of whom are in PA detention (most at al-Junayd prison in Nablus, but some at security bases throughout the West Bank). Al-Najmi and other security contacts said the PA Interior Ministry and Preventive Security Organization (PSO) will meet with ISA officials each month to try to get approval for the remaining al-Aqsa Brigades fugitives.

Comment

15. (C) While closing the fugitives file has been a slow process, taken as a whole (roughly 360 fugitives have been included thus far), the PA considers the amnesty/disarmament deal a major security success. Security contacts describe the recent approval of 41 fugitives as "very positive." The PA faces pressure from remaining fugitives, about 50 of whom are detained indefinitely at the PA's Junayd prison. On August 11, fugitives awaiting ISA approval rioted and burned their cells to pressure the PA to resolve their cases. While the PA has no assurances that the ISA will accept the remaining fugitives (who include several the GOI has previously attempted to kill or capture, such as Mahdi Abu Ghazalih from Nablus), recent acceptance of top-level al-Aqsa militants is a positive sign.

WALLES